

EDUCATING PHYSICIANS in THE NINETEENTH CENTURY



Selected Titles Bearing on the Subject
in the
Collections of the National Library of Medicine
by
Thomas Neville Bonner

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Foreward

The following pages grow out of a comparative study of medical education in Great Britain, France, Germany, and the United States in the nineteenth century undertaken during my eight months as Visiting Scholar at the National Library of Medicine in 1987. At the suggestion of John L. Parascandola, Chief of the History of Medicine Division, the bibliography was prepared primarily to assist scholars working in medical education or related fields at the Library but may have some uses beyond the NLM. It is not intended to be comprehensive or complete but selective of titles found in the Library's collections. Although I have used materials from other libraries in my own work, I have not attempted to include titles in the Bibliography that are not found in the National Library of Medicine. The lack of detailed bibliographical guides to published materials in the multinational study of medical education may add to the value of such a publication.

The subject of medical education has been surprisingly little explored by historians. Useful national histories exist for only a few major countries and almost no modern work seeks to compare developments in more than one country. The only comprehensive multinational study of the development of medical education was written by the Viennese historian Theodor Puschmann in 1889 and republished, with an introduction by Erwin Ackerknecht, as late as 1966: *A History of Medical Education* (New York: Hafner, 1966). Ackerknecht found it "most surprising and disturbing" that this study was still "the only serious treatise in the field up to this day." While still useful for the early period, it is necessarily sketchy on the critical developments of the nineteenth century. Medical education in the United States, for example, merited only one page in Puschmann's study. Since that time, only the symposium organized by C.D. O'Malley in Los Angeles in 1968 and subsequently published as a book has sought to deal in any comprehensive way with the subject: *The History of Medical Education* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1970). This work consists of a series of essays by different authors on the history of educating physicians throughout the world. Of uneven quality and differing in approach and organization, the essays are all rooted in a single time or nation and, even less than in Puschmann's work, no effort is made at cross-national or cross-cultural analysis.

The only person in the modern era to compare major systems of medical education in a systematic

and thorough way is Abraham Flexner. His studies on *Medical Education in Europe* (New York: Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1912) and *Medical Education: A Comparative Study* (New York: Macmillan, 1925) are still valuable for their treatment of historical, curricular, and organizational differences in the education of physicians. In his lifetime, Flexner's work was widely known throughout western Europe and he exerted a particularly important influence on British medical education.

In the case of the United States, a number of recent studies seek to deal both comprehensively and analytically with the growth of medical study. In the last decade or so, Martin Kaufman has written the first detailed account of medical study from the eighteenth century to the Flexner Report in *American Medical Education: The Formative Years, 1765-1910* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1976); Ronald L. Numbers edited a series of important essays on the growth of teaching in twelve medical subjects: *The Education of American Physicians* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980); and Kenneth M. Ludmerer reinterpreted the major factors and timing in the reform of American medical education in *Learning to Heal* (New York: Basic Books, 1985). All of these authors continue to pay tribute to the pioneering work in the American field of William Frederick Norwood, whose 1944 study of *Medical Education in the United States before the Civil War* was republished by Arno Press in 1971.

Fewer major studies have been made recently of the British, French, and German experience in training physicians. Still the only comprehensive survey of the subject in Great Britain is Charles Newman's *The Evolution of Medical Education in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Oxford University Press, 1957). Less useful but extending over a longer period is the series of essays edited by F.N.L. Poynter entitled *The Evolution of Medical Education in Britain* (London: Pitman Publishing Company, 1966). Several chapters in M. Jeanne Peterson's *The Medical Profession in Mid-Victorian London* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978) add new social and historical data to Newman's survey. Also quite helpful in understanding the important role played by hospitals in British medical education is Brian Abel-Smith, *The Hospitals 1800-1948: A Study in Social Administration in England and Wales* (London: Heinemann, 1964). It is difficult to find useful general studies of the development of medical education in France. For the period of

French dominance in the first half of the nineteenth century, the work of Erwin Ackerknecht, especially his *Medicine at the Paris Hospital 1794-1848* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1967), is probably the best place to begin. The changes in French surgery which profoundly affected the new French approach to training physicians are well described by Toby Gelfand, *Professionalizing Modern Medicine: Paris Surgeons and Medicine Science and Institutions in the 18th Century* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1980). Interesting but controversial for its unhistorical viewpoint and special language is *The Birth of the Clinic* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1973) by Michel Foucault. In the case of Germany, studies that put medical education in historical perspective are chiefly of older vintage. Best known is the classic history by Theodor Billroth, written in 1876 and translated fifty years later with an introduction by William Henry Welch: *The Medical Sciences in the German Universities: A Study in the History of Civilization* (New York: Macmillan, 1924). At the turn of the century were published two other well-known studies that include medical education by Wilhelm Lexis, *Die Deutschen Universitäten*, 3 vols. (Berlin: A. Asher, 1893) and Friedrich Paulsen, *The German Universities and University Study* (New York: Scribner's, 1906).

In recent years, scholars interested in higher education and general social and scientific development, as well as students of the professionalization process, have made contributions to our understanding of national differences in medical institutions. Not all of these studies can be found in the National Library of Medicine, which has understandably focused its acquisitions on works that are

predominantly medical in nature. Serious students of medical education will want to look at the complete writings of such scholars as Joseph Ben-David, Harry Paul, Fritz Ringer, Nathan Reingold, George Weisz, John Lesch, Eliot Freidson, W.J. Reader, Konrad Jarausch, Burton Bledstein, Noel Parry, and Claudia Huerkamp. Works by these authors that are available in the Library are listed below in the section entitled "Selected Secondary Books and Articles."

A very useful source for comparative study of medical education in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is found in contemporary travel literature. Scores of trained physicians, who went abroad to study and observe medicine in foreign lands, recorded their impressions in travel accounts, guide books, and letters to medical journals. Many were concerned not only with gaining postgraduate knowledge and skills themselves but with improving medical teaching at home. Inevitably they were struck by differences in methods, curricula, and requirements from their own countries. The National Library of Medicine has a particularly rich collection of these travel accounts and a special section of the Bibliography is devoted to them. Also useful for general information about medical schools are the NLM's collection of older catalogues and the surprisingly complete collection of medical theses or dissertations from European universities. Likewise helpful is the Library's collection of contemporary writings about medical education, especially in the United States and Great Britain, which include a large number of introductory lectures by faculty members at various American schools of medicine. These two are listed separately in the Bibliography.

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